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RHODE ISLAND

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LOOKING GLASS FOR THE TIMES

OR THE

FORMER SPIRIT OF NEW ENGLAND REVIVED IN THIS GENERATION.

BY

PETER FOLGER.

PROVIDENCE SIDNEY S. RIDER 1883.



PUBLISHER'S NOTE.



It is necessary that the publisher of this series of Tracts should explain why this Tract is included in the series. It was written in Massachusetts previously to 1675, by a resident, and is a very earnest and powerful argument against that policy carried out by the Government and Clergy of the Province, by which numbers of excellent men and women were imprisoned, whipped, banished, or suffered martyrdom, on account of their religious belief. Mary Dyer, the wife of the Rhode Island Secretary, was just as much a martyr as was John Huss. A recent writer on Roger Williams's banishment, maintains that Williams was banished because he was politically dangerous to the state. Mary Dyer hanged in Massachusetts because she, too, was politically dangerous to the state? Another and still later writer maintains that Rhode Island was settled by a parcel of religious fanatics. Pray what epithet will be apply to those who remained in Massachusetts to hang or put in irons the poor fanatics who would not surrender their opinions nor their lands? Rhode Island they reasoned with men to convince them of their religious errors, and, failing to convince, let them alone. In Massachusetts, failing to convince, they brought an end to the argument by hanging the "fanatic."



Mr. Folger, who lived at the time, was of mature years, possessed of a clear intelligence and of a powerful mind, makes no mention of these poor *fanatics* being "politically dangerous to the state," but he expressly says:

"The cause of this their suffering Was not for any sin."

Will the persistent misrepresentations of the writers of Massachusetts history never come to an end? What force is there in the argument that Roger Williams was politically dangerous to the state when everybody can see that within a stone's throw of Massachusetts he founded another state, which grew and prospered certainly as much as the one from which he was driven. and from which came forth those principles of religious liberty which to-day govern not only Massachusetts, but every other portion of the civilized world. Writers of what they wish called history would do well to cease misrepresenting these facts. is because Mr. Folger makes special reference to these poor "fanatics" who settled in Rhode Island, and suffered afterwards in Massachusetts, and because of his manly protest against all such treatment, his fearless statement of the truth as he saw it. that the publisher has been induced to reprint his verses. day the world at large outside of the commonwealth is with Mr. Folger, and when he tells the Massachusetts magistrate.

> "Indeed I really believe its not your buisness To meddle with the church of Christ in matters more or less,"

the world is with him; and men wonder that these relics of a barbaric age find defenders in this nineteenth century.



The fourth specification of the charges against Williams, as given by Winthrop, and upon which every writer must rely, is as follows: "That the civil magistrate's power extends only to the bodies and goods and outward state of man." According to these modern investigators, this fourth specification had no reference to the rights of conscience. They hold that it clearly showed Mr. Williams to be in opposition to "a due subordination to the powers that be in the state, made him a subverter of the very foundations of their government." *

Mr. Williams believed the power of the civil magistrate extended to the body and goods of the citizens of the state and not farther; this was subverting the very foundations of the government.

The author of a recently published and apparently exhaustive examination of the case of Roger Williams, reaches the conclusion, first that Williams was not banished at all—"exclusion" is the euphemistic phrase he uses; and second, that his views concerning liberty of conscience had little or nothing to do with the "exclusion," but that Williams was "excluded" for "reasons purely political," and having no relations to any other subjects "than those bearing on the common rights of property." A still more recent writer, in his "short history of the English Colonies," gives us music from the same lyre, indeed it almost seems that he must have read the former treatise, for he also disbelieves in the "banishment" of Mr. Williams; "driven out" is the phrase which he uses, "not because he believed in liberty of conscience, but because his acts were politically dangerous."

^{*&}quot;As to Roger Williams," page 9.



Williams held that the King of England possessed no title to the land in New England, that it belonged to the original possessor, the Indian, and that any valid title to it must be obtained by paying the Indian for it. This he claimed the Massachusetts settlers had not done, and therefore their titles were invalid.

The doctrine that a person holding to the opinion that the owner and possessor of property is entitled to be paid for it, is a "person politically dangerous to the state," seems altogether novel. Such a defence set up by some delinquent debtor before the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, would be an occasion of some interest in these days to such poor "fanatics" as are now living in these Plantations.

Having given his reasons for reproducing, as a Rhode Island Historical Tract, Mr. Folger's verses, the publisher has compiled from various sources some account of Mr. Folger, "the strong-brained and free-hearted old surveyor of Nantucket." Mr. Duyckinck says "he was an Englishman, that he came to America with his father from Norwich in 1635, that he was then eighteen years of age. The family settled at Martha's Vineyard. In 1663 Peter Folger removed to Nantucket among the first settlers. He was one of five commissioners to lay out the land, being well qualified by his knowledge of surveying for such a task. The words of the order prove the estimation in which he was held in the community, 'whatsoever shall be done by them, or any three of them, Peter Folger being one, shall be accounted legal and valid.' He was learned in the Indian languages and was of much service as an interpreter."

He died in 1690, leaving a wife and several children. His youngest daughter, Abiah, became the mother of Benjamin Frank-



lin, who, in his autobiography makes honorable mention of his mother, and his grandfather, and especially of these verses, thus: "I was born at Boston in New England. My mother, the second wife, was Abiah Folger, daughter of Peter Folger, one of the first colonists of New England, of whom Cotton Mather makes honorable mention in his ecclesiastical history of that province as a pious and learned Englishman, if I rightly recollect his expressions. I have been told of his having written a variety of little pieces, but there appears to be only one in print, which I met with many years ago. It was published in the year 1675, and is in familiar verse agreeably to the tales of the times and country. The author addresses himself to the governors for the time being, speaks for liberty of conscience, and in favour of the anabaptists, quakers, and other sectaries who had suffered per-To this persecution he attributes the wars with the natives and other calamities which afflicted the country, regarding them as judgments of God in punishment of so odious an offence, and he exhorts the government to the repeal of laws so contrary to charity. The poem appeared to be written with a manly freedom and a pleasing simplicity."

From the statement made by Franklin that these verses were published in 1675, the opinion has hitherto been held that there was such an edition. It has now come to be doubted. In fact in one edition of the autobiography the words, "published in 1675," were altered to "written in 1675." No copy is now known previous to that of 1763, from which this edition is reprinted.

In the forthcoming volume of the catalogue of the library of the late John Carter Brown, Mr. John R. Bartlett has surveyed



the whole ground. From his note the publisher has been permitted to make such extracts as he desired. Mr. Bartlett says: "Notwithstanding these assertions that the Looking Glass for the Times, was printed in 1675, no copy of such edition is known to exist, nor is it found in any catalogue; the inference is that the writers who mention a printed edition of 1675, are in error. That they saw a manuscript copy of it and that the first and only printed edition of it is that of 1763. Subin in his dictionary gives both editions, but says he never saw the former. Mr. Duyckinck reprinted the verses, but he took them from a mannscript copy."

If, as it now seems to be shown by Mr. Bartlett, the verses were not printed until 1763, nearly three quarters of a century after Mr. Folger's death, some of the commendations bestowed on him by Prof. Tyler, because "he nobly declined shirking all responsibility in the affair, but just wove his name and his place of abode into the tissue of his verse," disappear. It cannot be held that a man particularly braves public sentiment whose utterances are kept out of sight, in manuscript, three quarters of a century after his death. With another opinion by this same writer there can be no difference, that "this ballad, though without one sparkle of poetry, is great in frankness and in force."



Looking GLASS

FORTHE

OR.

The former Spirit of New-England revived in this generation.

To which is added.

The Reports from the Lords of the Committee of Councils, and the KING's Order relating to the People called Quakers in New-England.

By Peter Folger.

Let all that read these Verses know, That I intend something to show About our War, how it bath been, And also what is the chief Sin, That God doth so with us contend, And when these Wars are like to end. Read then in Love; do not despise What here is set before thine eyes.

Printed in the Year 1763.





A

Looking Glass, &c.

EW-England for these many Years hath had both Rest and Peace, But now the Case is otherwise; our Trouble doth encrease. The plague of War is now begun in some great Colonies, And many Towns as defolate we may fee with our Eyes. The Lofs of many goodly Men we may lament also, Who in the War have lost their lives, and fallen by our Foe. Our Women also they have took, and Children very finall; Great Cruelty they have used to some, tho' not to all.



The Enemy that hath done this, are very foolish Men;

Yet God doth make of them a Rod to punish us for Sin.

If we then truly turn to God, he will remove his Ire,

And will forthwith take this his Rod And cast it into Fire.

Let us then fearch what is the Sin that God doth punish for;

And when found out cast it away, and ever it abhor.

Sure 'tis not chiefly for those Sins that Magistrates do name,

And make good Laws for to suppress, and execute the same.

But 'tis for that fame crying Sin, that Rulers will not own,

And that whereby much Cruelty to brethren hath been shown:

The Sin of Perfecution fuch Laws established;



By which Laws they have gone fo far, as Blood hath touched Blood.

It is now Forty Years ago, fince fome of those were made,

Which was the Ground and Rife of all the perfecuting Trade.

Then many worthy persons were banished to the Woods,

Where they among the Natives did lofe their most precious Bloods.

And fince that, many Godley Men have been to Prison sent;

They have been fin'd and whip'd also, and suffer'd Banishment.

The Cause of this their Suffering was not for any Sin,

But for the Witness that they bare against Babes Sprinkling.

Of later time their hath been some Men come into this Land,

To warn the Rulers of their Sins, as I do understand.



They call'd on all, both great and small, to fear God and repent; And for their Testimonies thus they suffer'd Punishment. Yea, fome of them they did affirm, that they were fent of God To testify to great and small, that God would fend his Rod Against those Colonies, because they did make Laws not good; And if those Laws were not repeal'd. the end would be in Blood. And tho' that these were harmless Men, and did no hurt to any, But lived well like honest Men, as testify'd by many; Yet did these Laws entrap them so, that they were put to Death, And could not have the Liberty to speak near their last Breath. But these Men were as I have heard, against our College Men;



And this was out of doubt to me, that which was most their sin. They did reprove all Hirelings, with a most Sharp Reproof, Because they knew not how to preach, till fure of Means enough. Now to the Sufferings of these Men, I have but gave a hint; Because that in George Bishop's Book you may fee all in print. But may we know the Counfellors that brought our Ruler sin, To be fo guilty as they are, of the aforefaid Sin? They were the tribe of Ministers, as they are said to be, Who always to our Magistrates must be the eyes to see, These are the Men that by their Wits. have spun so fair a Thread, That now themselves and others are

of Natives in a Dread.



What need is there of fuch a Fear if we have done no Ill?

But 'tis because that we have been not doing of God's Will.

When Cain had flain his Brother, then began this Fear to be,

That every Man would do to him the same that did him see.

The Scripture doth declare the Cause why Cain did kill his Brother;

It was because the Deeds of one was good, and not the other.

Because that God did Favour show

To Abel more than he,

That was in verity the thing that Envy could not fee.

Then let us all, both great and small take heed how we do fight

Against the Spirit of the Lord, which is our highest Light.

Let Magistrates and Ministers consider what they do;

34 0.

Let them repeal those evil Laws, and break those Bands in two,

Which have been made as Traps and Snares to catch the Innocents,

And whereby it has gone so far, to Acts of Violence.

I fee you write yourselves in Print, the Balm of Gilead;

Then do not act as if you were like Men that are half mad.

If you can heal the Land, what is the Cause things are so bad?

I think instead of that, you make the Hearts of People sad.

Is this a Time for you to press, to draw the Blood of those

That are your Neighbours and your Friends as if you had no Foes.

Yea fome there are, as I have heard, have lately found out Tricks

To put the Cause of all the War upon the Hereticks,



Or rather on some Officers that now begin to flack The execution of those Laws, whose consequence is black. I do affirm to you, if that be really your mind, You must go turn another Leaf, before that Peace you find. Now loving Friends and Country-Men, I wish we may be wife; Tis now a time for every Man to fee with his own Eyes. 'Tis easy to provoke the Lord to fend among us War; 'Tis easy to do Violence, to envy and to jar; To shew a Spirit that is high, to fcorn and domineer; To pride it out as if there were, no God to make us fear; To covet what is not our own, to cheat and to oppress;

To live a Life that might free us from Acts of Righteoufness; To fwear and lie, and to be drunk, to backbite one another: To carry Tales that may do hurt and Mischief to our Brother! To live in fuch Hypocrify, as Men may think us good, Although our Hearts within are full of Evil, and of Blood. All these and many Evils more are easy for to do; But to repent, and to reform, we have no Strength unto. Let us then feek for help from God, and turn to him that smite; Let us take heed, that at no time, we fin against our Light. Let's bear our testimony plain 'gainst Sin in High and Low; And see that we no Cowards be, to hide the Light we know.



When Yonathan is call'd to Court, shall we as Stander's by, Be still and have no Word to speak, but suffer him to die? If that you fay you cannot help, things will be as they are; I tell you true, 'tis plain and clear, those Words may come from fear. That you shall lose some carnal things, if you do speak for God; And here you go the nearest way to taste deep of his Rod. 'Tis true, there are some times indeed of Silence to the Meek; Not ever, for the Lord doth fay, there is a time to speak. Be vigilant then for to fee the movings of your heart, And you will know right well the time when you shall act your Part. I would not have you for to think, tho' I have wrote fo much,



That I hereby do throw a Stone at Magistrates af such. The Rulers in the Country I do own them in the Lord; And fuch as are for Government, with them I do accord. But that which I intend hereby, is that they would keep bound, And meddle not with God's Worship, for which they have no ground. And I am not alone herein, there's many hundreds more That have for many Year's ago fpake much upon that Score, Indeed I really believe it's not your Bufiness To meddle with the Church of Christ, in Matters more or less, There's work enough to do besides, to judge in mine and thine, To succour Poor and Fatherless, that is the Work in fine.



And I do think that now you find enough of that to do;
Much more at fuch a Time as this as there is War alfo,
Indeed I count it very low for People in these Days,
To ask the Rulers for their leave to serve God in his Ways.

I count it worse in Magistrates to use the Iron Sword,

To do that Work which Christ alone will do by his own Word.

The Church may now go ftay at home, there's nothing for to do;

Their Work is all cut out by Law, and almost made up too.

Now Reader, least you should mistake, in what I said before

Concerning Minister's, I think to write a few Words more,

I would not have you for to think that I am such a Fool,



To write against Learning, as such, or to cry down a School.

But 'tis that Popish College way, that I intend hereby,

Where Men are mew'd up in a Cage, fit for all Villany.

But I shall leave this puddle Stuff to neighbours at the Door,

That can speak more unto such things, upon a knowing Score.

And now these Men though ne'er so bad, when they have learn'd their Trade,

They must come in and bear a Part, whatever Laws are made.

I can't but wonder for to see our Magistrates and Wise,

That they fit still, and suffer them, to ride on them, not rise,

And stir them up to do that Work that Scripture Rule there wants,

To perfecute and perfecute

Those that they judge are Saints.



(15)

There's one thing more that I believe is worse than all the rest, They vilify the Spirit of God, and count School Learning Best. If that a Boy hath learn'd his Trade, and can the Spirit difgrace, Then he is lifted up on high, and needs must have a Place, But I shall leave this dirty Stuff, and give but here a hint, Because that you have Cradock's Book, and may fee more in Print. There are some few, it may be, that are clear of this same Trade; And of those Men, I only say, these Verses are not made. Now for the length of time, how long these Wars are like to be, I may speak fomething unto that, if Men will reason see. The Scripture doth point out the time,

and 'tis as we do chuse,



For to obey the Voice of God, or else for to refuse.

The Prophet Feremy doth fay, when War is threatened fore,

That if Men do repent and turn, God will afflict no more.

But fuch a turning unto God, as is but Verbally,

When Men refuse for to reform, it is not worth a fly.

'Tis hard for you, as I do hear, though you be under Rod,

To fay to Ifrael Go, you, and ferve the Lord your God.

Though you do many Prayers make, and add Fasting thereto,

Yet if your Hands be full of Blood, all this will never do.

The end that God doth fend his Sword, is that we might amend;

Then if that we reform aright, the War wil shortly end.



New-England they are like the Yews, as like, as like can be; They made large Promises to God, at home and at the Sea: They did proclaim free Liberty, they cut the Calf in twain, They past between the Part thereof: O this was all in vain! For fince they came into this Land, they floated to and fro, Sometimes their Brethren may be free, while hence to Prison go. According as the times to go, and Weather is abroad, So we can ferve our felves sometimes, and fometimes ferve the Lord. But let us hear what God doth fay to fuch backfliding Men, That can with Ease so break their Vows, and foon go back again. Fer. 34. He faith he will proclaim for them, a Freedom to the Sword,



Because they would not fear him so as to obey his Word.

This Liberty unto the Sword, he hath proclaim'd for us,

And we are like to feel it long, if Matters do go thus.

'Tis better for our Magistrates, to shorten time, I say,

By breaking of those Bands in two, that look an evil way.

You do profess your selves to be Men that do pray always,

They do not keep such evil Laws, as may ferve at wet Days.

If that the Peace of God did rule with Power in our Heart,

Then outward War would flee away, and Rest would be our Part.

If we could love our Brethren, and do to them, I fay,

As we would they should do to us, we should be quite straightway.



But if that we a fmiting go of Fellow-Servants fo No marvel if our Wars encrease, and things fo heavy go. 'Tis like that some may think and say, our War would not remain, If fo be that a thousand more of Natives were but flain. Alass! these are but foolish thoughts, God can make more arise, And if that there were none at all, he can make War with Flys. It is the Presence of the Lord must make our Foes to shake, Or elfe it's like he will e'er long, know how to make us quake. Let us lie low before the Lord, in all Humility, And then we shall with Asa see our Enemies to fly. But if that we do leave the Lord,

and trust in Fleshly Arm,



Then 'tis no wonder if that we do here more News of Harm.

Let's have our Faith and Hope in God, and trust in him alone,

And then no doubt this Storm of War it quickly will be gone.

Thus Reader, I in Love to all, leave these few Lines with thee,

Hoping that in the Substance we shall very well agree.

If that you do mislike the Verse, for its uncomely Dress,

I tell thee true, I never thought that it would pass the Press,

If any at the Matter kick, it's like he's gall'd at Heart,

And that's the Reason why he kicks, because he finds it smart.

I am for Peace, and not for War, and that's the Reason why

I write more plain than fome Men do, that use to daub and lie.



But I shall cease and set my Name to what I here insert,
Because to be a Libeller,
I hate it with my Heart.
From *Sherbon Town, where now I dwell, my Name I do put here,
Without Offence your real Friend,
it is Peter Folger. April 23, 1676.

^{*} Nantucket.



APPENDIX.

At the Court at St. JAMES's, the 2d Day of June, 1724.

PRESENT.

The KING's most Excellent Majesty.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. A. B. of Canterbury. Lord Chancellor. Lord President. Lord Privy Seal. Lord Chamberlain. Duke of Roxburg.

Duke of Newcastle.
Earl of Westmorland.
Lord Visc. Townshend.
Lord Visc. Torrington.
Mr. Speaker of the House
of Commons.
Mr. Vice Chamberlain.
William Pultney, Esq;

the Right Honourable the Lords of the Committee of Councils, upon the Petition of Thomas Richardson and Richard Partridge, on behalf of Joseph Anthony, John Sisson, John Akin, and Phillip Taber, Prisoners in the common Goal at New Bristol, in his Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New England, for not assessing the Inhabitants of the Towns of Dartmouth and Tiverton, the additional Taxes of one Hundred Pounds, and Seventy two Pounds eleven Shillings, imposed upon them by an Act passed there in the Year 1722, which appears to be for the Maintenance of Presbyterian Ministers, who are not of their perswasion; and also in behalf of their Friends called Quakers in general, who are frequently under great Sufferings for Conscience sake



in that Government: By which Report it appears, that their Lordships are of Opinion, that it may be advisable for his Majesty to remit the said additional Taxes, so imposed on the said two Towns, and to discharge the faid Perfons from Goal.

His Majelly in Council taking the faid Report into Confideration, is graciously pleafed to approve thereof, and hereby to remit the faid additional Taxes of one Hundred Pounds, and Seventy two Pounds eleven Shillings, which were by faid Act to be affelfed on the faid Towns of Dartmouth & Tiverton. And his Majesty is hereby further pleased to order, that the said Toleph Anthony, John Siffon, John Akin, & Phillip Taber, be immediately released from their Imprisonment on account thereof. And the Governour, Lieutenant Governour, and Commander in Chief for the time being, of his Majesty's faid Province of the Massachusetts-Bay, and all others whom it may concern, are to take Notice, and yield due Obedience hereunto Temple Stanyan.

To the KING's most Excellent Majesty,

May it please your Majesty,

IN Obedience to an Order in Council from the late Lords Justices, during your Majesty's Absence abroad, bearing date the 24th day of October last, we did make a Representation upon an Act pass'd in the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New-England in 1722, entituled, An Act for apportioning and affelling a Tax of Six Thousand two Hundred thirty two Pounds thirteen Shillings & eleven Pence. Since which Time another Act mention'd in the



faid Order of Reference passed the 29th day of May, 1723, entituled, An AEt for apportioning and affeffing a Tax of Six Thousand two Hundred and five Pounds fifteen Shillings & eleven Pence Half Penny, is come to our hands; by which Act a Tax is laid in express Terms upon the Inhabitants of Dartmouth and Tiverton, for the Support of a Presbyterian, whom they call an Orthodox Minister, which falls almost entirely upon the Quakers; there being very few Inhabitants of any other Perswasion in these two Towns. But as by the Charter granted to this Province, a free and absolute Liberty of Conscience to all Christans (except Papists) was intended to have been their Foundation and Support; and as by feveral Laws passed there, it seems to have been laid down as a just and equitable Rule, that the Majority of each Town-Congregation should have the choice of their own Teachers, we cannot fee why the Quakers should be refused this Liberty in the Towns where they are so great a Majority, and be obliged to maintain a Teacher of different Perfwasion. Wherefore we humbly propose to your Majesty, that this Act may be repealed.

Which is most humbly fubmitted,

Whitehall, May 6, 1724.

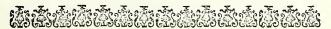
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A true Copy, Test. R. Partridge. Westmorland.

T. Pelham. M. Bladen.

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F I N I S







RHODE ISLAND

HISTORICAL TRACTS

NO. 10.

LOOKING WLASS FOR THE TIME

EV

ETER FOLLER.











